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Brooke F Adams 08/06/2006 02:07:06 PM From DB/Inbox: Brooke F Adams

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UNCLAS CAIRO 04604

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SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [UK](#) [AG](#) [EG](#) [AL](#)
SUBJECT: EGYPT MEDIA TRENDS FOR JULY 25, 2006

Sensitive But Unclassified. Not for internet distribution.

¶1. Summary. Today,s Egyptian major developing story in Egyptian media was President Mubarak,s statement before departing for Saudi Arabia during which he declared the current situation in Lebanon as "destructive chaos." Headlines continued to be strongly negative toward perceived US involvement in the conflict, and opposition papers used emotion-invoking photos to stir sentiment against the US and Israel. Commentaries have focused largely on "US efforts to create a new Middle East" in negative tones, and at least one opinion poll shows that the majority of voters believe the conflict will widen.
End
summary.

¶2. Destructive Chaos. The major developing story of the day was President Mubarak,s trip to Saudi Arabia to meet with King Abdullah and his strong pre-departure statement. As picked up by all major news outlets, he spoke critically of the US,s efforts thus far. He said, "The fighting is horrible and the process has not been rightly calculated, only women and children are paying the price." If the Rome conference does not produce tangible results, the situation will

be drastic and the parties will not find a way out. The U.S. has certain circumstances. The Arab and Islamic countries have also certain circumstances and they all want an immediate ceasefire. What about Rice,s visit? I saw many statements. But in any case we are witnessing destructive chaos, not constructive chaos."

¶3. In the headlines. Pro-government dailies, Al-Akhbar, Al-Ahram and Gomhouriyya focused first on Mubarak,s meeting with Saudi King Abdullah and his calls for immediate cease-fire. Al-Akhbar,s front page main story quoted his warning of a "humanitarian crisis if the confrontation continues." Al Ahram and Gomhouriyya bannered Mubarak,s call for an immediate cease-fire and warning over the gravity of the situation. Al-Akhbar,s pages 8 and 9 included a story with a large photo of Secretary Rice,s meeting with Siniora under the headlines,

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"After rejecting her proposal which puts all the eggs in one basket, Rice meets Olmert today in Israel after a negative meeting with Berri in Beirut." The second story on the front-page of Al-Ahram reported that "Rice calls for cease-fire immediately after paralyzing Hezbollah." Today,s banner headline in opposition daily, Al Wafd, which has been one of the most critical papers of the US, used a quote by Al-Wafd party chairman, "American Injustice is the Greatest Factory for Producing Terrorism." In keeping with its shocking visual effects, Al Wafd,s front page also included pictures of an injured baby, an Israeli tank, and a picture below of Secretary Rice embracing Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora, with a large banner reading, "The Child and the Tank. Rice Says She is Worried about the Humanitarian Situation in Lebanon." Gomhouriyya reported that "Israel destroys ten houses in Beirut for every missile on Haifa."

¶4. In the commentaries. Today,s commentaries showed a continuation of the theme, "America,s new Middle East" and use of the ongoing war in Iraq as a comparison to the US "goals" in Lebanon. Large circulation, pro-government daily, Al-Akhbar,s editor-in-chief asked Rice in his editorial, "Does the US want to replicate the freedom to kill, and the democracy of destruction, that have been prevailing in Iraq over the past three years?" Columnists in Al-Wafd accuse "the new Ameri-Zionist plot of destroying the Islamic identity of Muslims" and liken Israel to "gangsters who commit crimes on behalf of someone else to get aid and vetoes in return." Pro-government, Al-Ahram, columnists accuse Secretary Rice of "waiting for more bloodshed in order to

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achieve her
new Middle East," glorify the "resistance in Lebanon and
Palestine,"
and bash the US for "redesigning the Middle East," and for
"using Hamas
and Hezbollah as excuses for bringing about a new Middle East
which
suits US interests."

¶5. Public opinion. An Egyptian website portal, masrawy.com
(similar
to yahoo with Arabic-only content), conducts online opinion
polls
regarding pressing issues. The current poll asks people to
predict how
the "Israeli war on Lebanon" will end. The votes continue to
roll in,
but as of today: 1,001 votes (6.4 percent) think the war
will end with
Israel,s assassination of Sheikh Nasrallah; 3,092 votes
(18.9 percent)
think the war will end with Israel,s submission to
Hezbollah,s demands;
1,560 votes (10 percent) think that Hezbollah will submit as
losses
increase; and 9,886 votes (63 percent) do not think the war
will end,
but will expand to include other countries.
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